

U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
Western District of New York

Further inquiries: (716) 843-5814

138 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14202

PRESS RELEASE

May 3, 2004

RE: UNITED STATES v. GINO JOHNSON

United States Attorney Michael A. Battle announced the sentencing today of Gino Johnson, age 39, of Niagara Falls, New York, who was convicted of one count of Operating a Continuing Criminal Enterprise (CCE) in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 848 and one count of Money Laundering in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1956(a)(1) as charged in a federal Indictment and a separate federal felony Information. Johnson was sentenced to 210 Months imprisonment (17 years and 3 months) to be followed by 5 years supervised release and \$200 in special assessments. The defendant was also ordered to forfeit a Mercedes Benz and approximately \$39,466 in illegally obtained proceeds. He was sentenced today by Hon. Richard J. Arcara, Chief United States District Judge.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Mary Clare Kane, who handled the case, stated that in March 2000, the defendant was arrested along with 19 others by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration in connection with a 1999 federal narcotics investigation. In July through September 1999, officers from U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA),

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Buffalo and Niagara Falls Police Departments utilized federal wiretaps over Johnson's telephones. During the lengthy investigation of Johnson and others, law enforcement agents made a number of cocaine and U.S. currency seizures. As a result, DEA and FBI learned that Johnson was the leader or organizer of a group of five or more individuals who were traveling to New York City to obtain cocaine powder in kilogram quantities from their source of supply for cocaine in New York City. Johnson also came under investigation by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for Money Laundering as a result of certain financial activities designed to disguise his ill-gotten assets. Because he was the leader of an organization of criminal cohorts, Johnson faced increased penalties under the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines.

The convictions were the culmination of an investigation on the part of the DEA under the direction of Resident Agent-in-Charge Mark T. Peterson and the FBI under the direction of Peter J. Ahearn, Special Agent in Charge and Internal Revenue Service under the direction of Special Agent-in-Charge Anne Marie Coons.

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